

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are now pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND § 103

Claims 1-4, 6-4, and 9-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ueta (U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,021). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueta (U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,021) in view of Yoshida et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,938,208). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueta (U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,021) in view of Incoing (U.S. Pat. No. 4,625,979). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicant notes that claim 1 includes the limitation of “a protruding feature made from said first material and located between the fastener hole and the exterior perimeter and spaced from said seal bead, and rising from the first surface a second predetermined height that is about equal to or greater than the first predetermined height, said protruding feature having first and second terminating end portions so as not to circumscribe said fastener hole.” Similarly, claim 10 includes the limitation of “forming a protruding feature made from said first material between the fastener hole and the exterior perimeter and spaced from said seal bead, and rising from the first surface a second predetermined height that is about equal to or greater

than the first predetermined height, said protruding feature having first and second terminating end portions so as not to circumscribe said fastener hole.”

Contrary to this, the disclosure of Ueta '021 discloses rubber beads 24 “formed around each bolt hole” (see column 14 lines 44-45). More specifically, the specification of Ueta '021 discloses “beads 24, 24’ are also formed to bound each of the cylinder bore holes 13, bolt holes 14, oil holes 15 and water holes 16” (see column 14, lines 46-48). The specification further states “as shown in FIGS. 3 to 4, the rubber bead 24 formed, in particular, around the bolt hole 14 has a cross section...” (see column 14, lines 50-52). Accordingly, it is clear from the specification of Ueta '021 that every bolt hole 14 is bound (or circumscribed) by a bead 24 that does not include first and second terminating end portions, as claimed.

The Examiner asserts that “Ueta discloses a protruding feature (protruding feature 24 that is between two adjacent bolt holes) that is spaced from the seal bead and which has the first and second terminating end portions so as not to circumscribe the fastener hole.” However, Applicant respectfully submits that the bead sections 24 extending between two adjacent bolt holes are not “located between the fastener hole and the exterior perimeter” as required by claim 1. Therefore, the bead sections 24 extending between two adjacent bolt holes does not anticipate the “protruding feature”, as claimed. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-10 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (734) 354-5445.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: Aug. 12, 2005

By: Ryan W. Massey
Ryan W. Massey, Reg. No. 38,543

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

FREUDENBERG-NOK GENERAL PARTNERSHIP
Ronald W. Wangerow, Reg. No. 29,597
Legal Department
47690 East Anchor Court
Plymouth, MI 48170-2455
Direct Line: (734) 354-5445
Facsimile: (734) 451-1445